

The Critic

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ALBION W. TOURGEE, AUTHOR OF "A FOOL'S ERRAND."

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THE BEST OF THE BOHEMIANS.

THE nearest approach to the Bohemian life of which Henri Murger wrote ever witnessed in the United States was probably in New York about twenty-five years ago; but it was of rather a mild character as compared with that described by the erratic Frenchman. The American as well as the English mind is averse from anything that does not pay in the end, and is more averse from anything that loses from the beginning; and as the Bohemian life certainly fulfils these conditions, its appearance has been infrequent and sporadic. Its type has not been very virulent, and it has generally been confined to the small class of persons who think to show superiority by leading more disorderly lives than their elders, and by carrying out, as far as they can, the motto of the poet,

"The present moment is our own,
The next we never saw."

Some seemed to gravitate toward it by temperament, others by uncertainty of pecuniary resources, and others again by curiosity or perversity of will. Among the first two classes were artists and men of letters; the third were men of the world, such as Thackeray sometimes drew. The Bohemian set which I have mentioned as existing in New York was made up of the three, though it embraced no eminent members of either, its artists, with rare exceptions, being those who earned a precarious existence by drawing on wood; its men of letters, with rarer exceptions, mostly journalists of various degrees of cleverness; and its men of the world, with one exception, lookers on in Vienna, who were willing to pay for being amused. They met in the evenings at a restaurant on the west side of Broadway, and dined, or supped, in a room under the sidewalk. The meals were such as they could pay for, or could get trusted for, and were accompanied, of course, by fluids, for it is one of the peculiarities of Bohemia to be always athirst. They ate, and drank, and made merry; they smoked, and talked, read verses, sang songs, discussed art, journalism, literature, and settled, no doubt, grave questions

"Of fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute."

In the small hours of the morning they found their way to their studios, newspaper offices, rooms, or wherever they slept, and woke late in the large hours of the day to begin such business as they had. This was a sample of Bohemia in New York twenty-five years ago.

I am the last person in the world to preach, for I can never bring myself to think because I am virtuous (if I am virtuous) that there shall be no more cakes and ale. I did not live this life myself, though I saw all I wished to of it; but several men whom I knew did live it, and died young: they lived broken lives, and died untimely deaths. I shall not pain their surviving friends by naming them, for these friends know to whom I refer, and know, too, that the end of these Bohemian nights—the moral of this Bohemian life—could only be summed up in the declaration of Hamlet to Horatio,

"We'll teach you to drink deep ere you depart."

I have to say something, however, of one man who was familiar with Bohemianism, and whose memory has lately been revived by Mr. Winter, who always finds the soul of goodness which the Master tells us is in things evil. I mean Fitz James O'Brien, whose "Poems and Stories" Mr. Winter has just collected in a handsome volume. I knew O'Brien almost from the day that he set foot in New York, which Mr. Winter thinks was about 1852; and I saw a great

deal of him, thereafter, sometimes at evening parties at the houses of our common friends, but oftener at my own rooms a year or two later. His good looks and his intelligence made him a favorite: if his antecedents in England, or Ireland, were inquired into, they must have been considered satisfactory. I presume he procured letters which placed him on a substantial footing in good society. At any rate, he was accepted there as a bright fellow, and a clever writer, who had a future in America. I saw him often at my rooms, as I have said, and some of the pleasantest evenings of my life were passed in those rooms with him and Bayard Taylor, who at that time, I think, had just returned from the Orient. We talked books, as young authors will, and we scribbled verses off hand, to show what geniuses we were, each scribbling on the same theme, which one of us had selected from several in a hat, or a box, and each doing his best to finish before the others. O'Brien generally came out ahead, and took the most novel view of which the subject admitted. He seized its dramatic aspect, and sprung it upon us at the close of his verses after the manner of some of Heine's smaller pieces. He was booted, and spurred, and in the saddle, while we were fumbling at the stall-door of Pegasus, and his dexterity was wonderful. I have looked over the collection of O'Brien's poems which Mr. Winter has excavated from old magazines and newspapers, and have found several therein which I believe to have been written on these occasions. "The Three Gannets" is one, "The Challenger" is another, and "Willy and I," I think, is a third. I have read the collection with the interest which naturally attaches to the work of one whom I knew and liked, and my opinion now is what it was twenty-five years ago—that O'Brien is not a poet. He was an exceedingly clever versifier, but I do not feel that he was a true poet. There is no sincerity in his work, which is as bright and thin as ice. He failed most, I think, when he was most ambitious; in other words, when he was trying hardest to be sincere. "Sir Brasil's Falcon" is a pretty fable, but it is not above the average of Willis's blank verse; and "Kane," in which he groans for power, like Tennyson's organ, reads like the first draft of one of Taylor's labored and least happy Odes. His inspiration was occasional, and, when it did not originate in those poetic duels with Taylor and myself, was pecuniary. He saw money in such and such subjects, and, the money being necessary to him, he wrote on such and such subjects. One of his most successful pecuniary poems was "The Prize Fight;" one of his failures, as Brummell described his rumpled neckcloths, was "The Sewing Bird," which Mr. Winter remembers was written in his lodgings, when O'Brien was destitute, cheerless, and hungry. "He sold 'The Sewing Bird' for one hundred dollars, and a few hours later he was as merry as a brook in spring-time."

O'Brien's stories, of which Mr. Winter has collected thirteen, are rather remarkable than excellent. "The Diamond Lens," which has been most widely praised, fails, as many of Poe's stories do, in non-recognition of that dread Power which the ancients embodied in Nemesis. They are informed with creative fancy, but are without conscience. If they have any prototypes, they should be sought among the fantasies of Hoffman, which are given over to the same imaginative lawlessness. Haste is evident in all that he wrote—impatient carelessness, and violated taste. We feel that he could have done better if he had taken more pains, but he would not take the pains. Why labor at a story, or a poem, when he could sell it as it was? The Harpers would buy it, the *Atlantic* would buy it, the *Whig Review* would buy it; *cui bono* beyond the needs of the day, or the hour? If his landlady would not be put off longer, he must write something, and pacify her, or quit his lodgings on the sly, and bilk her. It is the way of

Bohemia, in which O'Brien lived all his life. He was the best of the Bohemians, in that he was born a gentleman, and never quite forgot his *noblesse oblige*; in that he could fall on the battle-field, and not in the gutter. The feeling which prompted him to die—if I may trust my impression of O'Brien—was such as inspired the last verses that Byron ever wrote.

"If thou regret'st thy youth, *why live?*
The land of honorable death
Is here: up to the field, and give
Away thy breath!
Seek out—less often sought than found—
A soldier's grave, for thee the best:
Then look around, and choose thy ground,
And take thy rest."

R. H. STODDARD.

NIGHTS WITH UNCLE REMUS.*

[NOTE.—To some of the readers of THE CRITIC it may be unnecessary to introduce Uncle Remus and the little boy to whom he relates his wonderful fables; but, for the benefit of those who have never met with the plantation legends heretofore given to the public under the seal of the old man's authority, it should be stated that he is a relic of the system of slavery—a type of the old plantation negro. The stories are told to a little white child who is dear to Uncle Remus as the scion of a family with whom his whole life has been identified.]

I.

HOW MR. FOX FAILED TO GET HIS GRAPES.

One night the little boy to whom Uncle Remus is in the habit of relating his wonderful fables failed to make his appearance at the accustomed hour, and the next morning the intelligence that the child was sick went forth from the "big house." Uncle was told that it had been necessary during the night to call in two physicians. When this information was imparted to the old man, there was an expression upon his countenance of awe not unmixed with indignation. He gave vent to the latter:

"Dar now! Two un um! W'en dat chile rize up, ef rize up he do, he'll des natally be a shadder. Yer I is, gwine on eighty year, en I ain't tuck none er dat ar dockter truck yit, ceppin' it's dish yer flas' er poke-root w'at ole Miss Favers fix up fer de stiffness in my j'int. Dey'll come en dey'll go, en dey'll po' in der jollup yer en slap on der fly-plaster dar, twel bimeby dat chile won't look like hisse'f. Dat's wat! En mo'n dat, hit's mighty cu'us unter me dat ole folks kin go 'long en stan' up ter de rack en gobble up der 'lowance, en yit chilluns is got ter be stricken down. Ef Miss Sally'll des tu'n dem dockter mens loose onder me, I lay I lick up der physick twel dey go off 'ston-ish'd."

But no appeal of this nature was made to Uncle Remus. The illness of the little boy was severe but not fatal. He took his medicine and improved until, finally, even the doctors pronounced him convalescent. But he was very weak, and it was a fortnight before he was permitted to leave his room. He was restless, and yet his term of imprisonment was full of pleasure. Every night after supper Uncle Remus would creep softly into the back piazza, place his hat carefully on the floor, rap gently on the door by way of announcement, and so pass into the nursery. How patient the old man's vigils, how tender his ministrations, only the mother of the little boy knew; how comfortable and refreshing the change from the bed to the strong arms of Uncle Remus, only the little boy could say.

Almost the first manifestation of the child's convalescence was the renewal of his interest in the wonderful adventures of Brer Rabbit, Brer Fox, and the other brethren who flourished in that strange past over which this modern Æsop had thrown the veil of fable. "Miss Sally," as Uncle Remus

called the little boy's mother, sitting in an adjoining room, heard the youngster pleading for a story, and after a while she heard the old man clear up his throat with a great affectation of formality and begin.

"Dey wer'n't skasely no p'int whar ole Brer Rabbit en ole Brer Fox made der 'greements side wid wunner nudder; let 'lone dat, dey wuz one p'int 'twix' um w'ich it wuz same ez fier en tow, en dat wuz Miss Meadows en de gals. Little ez you might speck, dem same creeturs wuz bofe un um flyin' 'roun' Miss Meadows en de gals. Ole Brer Rabbit, he'd go dar, en dar he'd fine ole Brer Fox settin' up gigglin' wid de gals, en den he'd skuze hisse'f, he would, en gallop down de big road a piece, en paw up de san' same like dat ar ball-face steer w'at tuck'n tuck off yo' pa's coat-tail las' Febberwary. En likewise ole Brer Fox, he'd sa'nter in, en fine old man Rab. settin' 'longside er de gals, en den he'd go out down de road en grab a simmon-bush in his mouf, en natally gnyaw de bark off'n it. In dem days, honey," continued Uncle Remus, responding to a look of perplexity on the child's face, "creeturs wuz wuss dan w'at dey is now. Dey wuz dat—lots wuss.

"Dey went on dis a way twel, bimeby, Brer Rabbit 'gun ter 'cas' 'roun', he did, fer ter see ef he can't bus' inter some er Brer Fox 'rangements, en, attar w'ile, one day w'en he wer' settin' down by de side er de road wukkin' up de diffunt oggyment w'at strike pun his mine, en fixin' up his tricks, des 'bout dat time, he year a clatter up de long green lane, en yer come ole Brer Fox—*too-bookity—bookity—bookity—book*—lopin' 'long mo' samer dan a bay colt in de bolly-patch. En he wuz all primp up, too, mon, en he look slick en shiny like he des come outen de sto'. Ole man Rab., he sot dar, he did, en w'en ole Brer Fox come gallopin' long, Brer Rabbit, he up'n hail 'im. Brer Fox, he fotch up, en dey pass de time er day wid wunner nudder monst'us perlite, en den, bimeby attar w'ile, Brer Rabbit, he up'n say, sezee, dat he got some mighty good news fer Brer Fox, en Brer Fox, he up'n ax 'im w'at is it. Den Brer Rabbit, he sorter scratch his year wid his behime foot en say, sezee:

"I wuz takin' a walk day 'fo' yistiddy, sezee, 'w'en de fus' news I know'd I run up gin de bigges' en de fattes' bunch er grapes dat I ever lay eyes on. Dey wuz dat fat en dat big, sezee, 'dat de natal joose wuz des drappin' fum um, en de bees wuz a swawmin' attar de honey, en little ole Jack Sparrer en all er his fambly conneckshun wuz skeetin' 'roun' dar dippin' in der bills, sezee.

"Right den en dar," Uncle Remus went on, "Brer Fox mouf 'gun ter water, en he look outer his eye like he de bes' frien' w'at Brer Rabbit got in de roun' worril. He done fergit all 'bout de gals, en he sorter sidle up ter Brer Rabbit, he did, en he say, sezee:

"Come on, Brer Rabbit, sezee, 'en less you'n me go git dem ar grapes 'fo' deyer all gone, sezee. En den ole Brer Rabbit, he laff, he did, en he up'n 'spon', sezee:

"I hongry myse'f, Brer Fox, sezee, 'but I ain't hankerin' attar grapes, en I'll be in monst'us big luck ef I kin rush 'roun' yer some'rs en scrape up a bait er pusley time nuff fer ter keep der breff in my body. En yit, sezee, 'ef you take'n rack off attar deze yer grapes, w'at Miss Meadows en de gals gwine do? I lay dey got yo' name in de pot, sezee.

"Ez ter dat, sez ole Brer Fox, sezee, 'I kin drap 'roun' en see de ladies attarwards, sezee.

"Well, den, ef dat's yo' game, sez ole man Rab., sezee, 'I kin squat right flat down yer on de groun' en p'int out de way des de same ez leadin' you dar by de han', sezee; en den Brer Rabbit sorter chaw on his cud like he gedder'n up his 'membunce, en he up'n say, sezee:

"You know dat place whar you went attar sweetgum fer Miss Meadows en de gals de udder day? sezee.

* It is proper to state that the plantation fables to be included in the present series have been gathered and verified since the book entitled "Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings. The Folk-Lore of the Old Plantation," went to press; and they are printed here for the first time.

"Brer Fox 'low dat he know dat place same ez he do his own tater-patch.

"Well, den," sez Brer Rabbit, sezee, 'de grapes ain't dar. You git ter de sweetgum,' sezee, 'en den you go up de branch twel you come ter a little patch er bamboo-brier—but de grapes ain't dar. Den you follow yo' lef' han' en strike 'cross de hill twel you come ter dat big red-oak root—but de grapes ain't dar. On you goes down de hill twel you come ter nudder branch, en on dat branch dars a dogwood tree leanin' way over, en nigh dat dogwood dars a vine, en in dat vine, dar you'll fine yo' grapes. Deyer dat ripe,' sez ole Brer Rabbit, sezee, 'dat dey look like deyer done melt tergedder, en I speck you'll fine um full er bugs, but you kin take dat fine bushy tail er yone, Brer Fox,' sezee, 'en bresh dem bugs away.

"Brer Fox 'low he much 'blijje, en den he put out atter de grapes in a han'-gallop, en w'en he done got outer sight, en likewise outer year'n, Brer Rabbit, he take'n git a blade er grass, he did, en tickle hisse'f in de year, en den he holler en laff, en laff en holler twel he hatter lay down fer ter git his breff back 'gin.

"Den, atter so long time, Brer Rabbit, he jump up, he do, en take atter Brer Fox, but Brer Fox, he don't look ter de right ner de lef', en needer do he look behime; he des keep a rackin' 'long twel he come ter de sweetgum-tree, en den he tu'n up de branch twel he come ter de bamboo-brier, en den he tu'n squar ter de lef' twel he come ter de big red-oak root, en den he keep on down de hill twel he come ter de yuther branch, en dar he see de dogwood; en mo'n dat, dar nigh de dogwood he see de vine, en in dat vine dar wuz de big bunch er grapes. Sho' nuff, dey wuz all kivvud wid bugs.

"Ole Brer Rabbit, he'd bin a pushin' 'long atter Brer Fox, but he des hatter scratch gravel fer ter keep up. Las' he hove in sight, en he lay off in de weeds, he did, fer ter watch Brer Fox motions. Present'y Brer Fox crope up de leanin' dogwood-tree twel he come nigh de grapes, en den he sorter ballunce hisse'f on a lim' en gun um a swipe wid his big bushy tail, fer ter bresh off de bugs. But, bless yo' soul, honey! no sooner is he done dat dan he fetch a squall w'ich Miss Meadows vow atterwards she year plum ter her house, en down he come—*ker-blim!*"

"What was the matter, Uncle Remus?" the little boy asked.

"Law, honey! dat seetful Brer Rabbit done fool ole Brer Fox. Dem grapes all so fine wuz needer mo' ner less dan a big was' nes', en dem bugs wuz deze yer red wassies—deze yer speeshy wat's rank pizen fum een' ter een'. W'en Brer Fox drap fum de tree de wassies dey drap wid 'im, en de way dey wom ole Brer Fox up wuz sinful. Dey ain't mo'n tetch 'im, 'fo' dey had 'im het up ter de b'ilin' p'int. Brer Fox, he run, en he kick, en he scratch, en he bite, en he scramble, en he holler, en he howl, but look like dey got wuss en wuss. One time, hit seem like Brer Fox en his new 'quaintance wuz makin' todes Brer Rabbit, but dey ain't no sooner p'int dat way, dan ole Brer Rabbit, he up'n make a break, en he went sailin' thoo de woods wuss'n wunner deze yer whully-win's, en he ain't stop twel he fetch up at Miss Meadows.

"Miss Meadows en de gals, dey ax 'im, dey did, whar-bouts wuz Brer Fox, en Brer Rabbit, he up'n 'spon' dat he done gone a grape-huntin', en den Miss Meadows, she 'low, she did—

"Law, gals! is you ever year de beat'er dat? En dat, too, w'en Brer Fox done say he comin' ter dinner,' sez she. 'I lay I done wid Brer Fox, kaze you can't put no pen-nunce in deze mens,' sez she. 'Yer de dinner bin done dis long time, en we bin a waitin' like de quality. But now I'm done wid Brer Fox,' sez she.

"Wid dat, Miss Meadows dey ax Brer Rabbit fer ter stay ter dinner, en Brer Rabbit, he sorter make like he wanten be skuze, but bimeby he tuck a cheer en sot um out. He tuck a cheer," continued Uncle Remus, "en he ain't bin dar long twel he look out en spy ole Brer Fox gwine 'long by, en w'at do Brer Rabbit do but call Miss Meadows en de gals en p'int 'im out? Soon's dey seed 'im dey sot up a monst'us gigglement, kaze Brer Fox wuz dat swell up twel little mo'n he'd a bus'. His head wuz swell up, en down ter his legs, dey wuz swell up. Miss Meadows, she up'n say dat Brer Fox look like he done gone en got all de grapes dey wuz in de naberhoods, en wunner de yuther gals, she squeal, she did, en say:

"Law, ain't you shame, en right yer 'fo' Brer Rabbit!" "En den dey hilt der han's 'fo' der face en giggle des like gals duz deze days."

JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS.

LITERATURE

Ploughed Under.*

THE title of this book explains itself at first sight to all who are familiar both with the farmers' technique and with the methods of the United States Government in its dealings with its Indian "wards." It is a singularly well-chosen title: and the conception of the book is the thought of a humane person, thoroughly alive to the helpless position of the Indians and well acquainted with the history of their wrongs. If he had added to these qualifications true dramatic ability and a power of characterization, he might have made a better novel; but in these two last essential requisites for novel-writing he is deficient, and from this deficiency his story, considered as a story, has greatly suffered. Nevertheless, considered as a presentation, in a graphic and telling form, of Indian sufferings, and of the practical working of the "Indian policy" of the United States Government, it is of great value, and cannot fail to open the eyes of thousands of readers who would never be reached in any other way. It is the love-story of a chief in a small band of Indians, who are first described as living in their free and primitive state; then put under the care of an agent and confined on a reservation; and finally "removed" to Indian territory. The writer is evidently familiar with the official records of the Indian Bureau from first to last, and has had opportunity of knowing many of the atrocities which are committed by Indian agents and never set down in the official records. He has a keen sense of the satire of situations, and some of the best points in the book are where he has put into the mouths of imaginary characters—an Irish milkman, for instance—some of the arguments commonly used against the Indians. A visit of a senatorial commission to investigate the condition of the tribe is also most admirably told, and it is only too true to the life. One could wish that the conversation between this Senator and a Frenchman who, living near the tribe, had become their firm friend, could be printed by itself and circulated as a tract, so vividly does it embody not only the chronic ignorance of the public mind in regard to the true facts of the Indian's character and condition, but also the chronic obstinacy with which this chronic ignorance resists every attempt to enlighten it.

"Tell me," the Senator demanded with a majestic wave of his hand, "tell me, without reserve, what your tribe most wishes, and most needs." "The protection of just laws," my father answered. "The what! Do I understand you? The protection of law? Why, who disturbs you? Does not the agent defend you?" "Any one may rob us who wills. My child may be murdered, and I cannot

* Ploughed Under. The Story of an Indian Chief, Told by Himself. With an Introduction by Bright Eyes. New York: Fords, Howard & Hulbert. (Advance sheets.)

have the offender punished." "It is true, then, that our Indian policy is as yet imperfect, and some cases of violence may escape their proper punishment. I have heard rumors that this is the case, but have had no direct testimony of the fact." Here the Frenchman, boiling over with indignation, interrupts, and tells to the Senator the story (a true one, and only one out of hundreds) of a recent murder of an Indian by a white man, and the impossibility of getting him even indicted for it. "Be calm, my friend," the Senator complacently said; "you seem to be a man of sense, and as you can understand me, and speak to me in English, I do not object to having a few words with you. It is true that the ward-policy, if I may so call it, of our government is liable to the abuse you mention. But I fancy the Indians would not be better off if they were placed under the protection of the law and forced to support themselves. The Indian is lazy and indifferent—I can speak unreservedly, since I speak in general terms—and is constitutionally opposed to self-support." "Pardon me," Kind Face, the Frenchman, replied; "you are either ignorant or grossly misinformed." "I am thoroughly conversant with the condition of our Indian tribes, as I am chairman of the committee. I have mentioned," the Senator haughtily replied. Upon which the Frenchman proceeded to give him four pages of irrefragable testimony from men in charge of Indians to the effect that they were industrious and peaceable. "I must insist that I speak generally when I say that the Indian character is worthless," responded the Senator. After pages more of similar testimony, "I repeat my assertion of the worthlessness of the Indian character," said the Senator, "and I further remark that by his love of bloodshed and robbery, the red man has forfeited all claim to our consideration." More pages still of testimony elicited from the senatorial chairman only this comment: "You are so evidently a partisan in this matter that it will be necessary for us to take your arguments with some allowance." And from a still further reading of the same testimony, he roused himself with, "By Jove! it must be dinner-time! I was almost asleep!"

The chapter in which this scene occurs embodies an amount of carefully collated testimony from official sources on the Indian side of the "Indian question" which ought to convert every man that reads it into a "partisan" who would never feel happy in his own home again so long as these helpless creatures remain in our borders without home, freedom, or the protection of the law. There are many incidents in the narrative which will be read, no doubt, with incredulity by the masses of readers, such as the voluntary death of an Indian chief to save his people from the vengeance of the United States Government for the tribe's failure to surrender one of their number who had murdered a white man, and whom, after fifteen days of desperate and agonized search—women and children as well as men penetrating the forests round about—they had failed to find. But all these incidents are matters of history. There is not one statement of fact in the book which cannot be supported by unimpeachable testimony, and which, we may add, cannot be matched by scores of others equally incredible and equally heart-sickening. It is to be hoped that "Ploughed Under" will follow fast in the footsteps of "A Fool's Errand" and "Bricks without Straw." It is as true of it as of them, that a mighty purpose to show up wrongs, backed by an array of facts, and incidents drawn from actual life, has tremendous force in opening people's eyes to truth, and making them think rightly. Such books make their way and do their work better, perhaps, than books which are more dramatic in construction and more artistic in their execution. A battle-axe is better than a rapier in hewing down a multitude.

Life and Times of Mme. de Staël.*

DR. STEVENS' biography of Madame de Staël will probably become for many years the standard authority on the subject. Wrought with consummate patience, and with a zeal that cannot be too highly commended, it is as readable as a novel and as thorough as an encyclopædia. All preceding biographies have been winnowed by its compiler, in

order that much chaff might be thrown away and many good grains of fact might be garnered. And there can be no doubt that the labor has not been spent in vain, for the literary firmament in which Madame de Staël revolved was so thickly studded with stars that it will be long before the world grows tired of gazing at them. The doubt begins with Dr. Stevens's estimate of Madame de Staël herself. He thinks it necessary to suspend in front of his volumes those tawdry wreaths of eulogy which her contemporaries laid, with much bowing and smirking, at her feet. He tells us that Byron said "she is a woman by herself;" that Sir James Mackintosh proclaimed her "Allemagne" to be "the most elaborate and masculine production of the faculties of woman;" and that Lamartine called her "the last of the Romans under this Cæsar, who was afraid to destroy her and could not abuse her." What Byron really thought of her, he announces pretty plainly in his letters. "Her society is overwhelming," he says; "an avalanche that buries one in glittering nonsense—all snow and sophistry." And again: "We get up from table too soon after the women; and Mrs. Corinne always lingers so long after dinner that we wish her—in the drawing-room." Sir James Mackintosh, who was as vain as Mme. de Staël herself, writes thus of her: "She treats me as the person she most delights to honor. I am generally ordered with her to dinner as one orders beans and bacon." As for "this Cæsar," whose dislike for Madame de Staël is the secret of half her notoriety, his principal feeling toward her was one of contempt. "She must always be scribbling," said Napoleon. "No matter what the subject is, she is bound to write about it, and as she might make a convert here or there, I have to keep an eye on her." The truth is that there is and has long been a revolt from the adulation once paid to Necker's daughter. The memory of her wit, her graces, her fascination has passed away. A literary race has grown up that cares nothing for her sensibility. It sees before it, as memorials of her work, two bulky treatises, "Corinne" and "L'Allemagne," in which Scudery and Grimm are mingled in equal proportions, and in which it is as difficult to find a spark of genius as in the madrigals and romances of the Hôtel Rambouillet.

This change of sentiment does not seem to have made itself apparent to Dr. Stevens. He still sees the tourists wending their way to Coppet. He watches them as they eagerly consult their guide-books; as they hasten down the colonnades of oaks to the Château de Necker; as they stand spell-bound before the mansion and whisper to one another: "Here she lived. Here she mused on German literature and Italian art. Here Benjamin Constant wooed her and the youthful Rocca won her." He never suspects that there might also be a reasonable curiosity to visit the spot where Schlegel and Sismondi did their best work. Indeed, the main fault of the book is that the subordination of all its personages to Madame de Staël is carried out in a spirit that savors of servility, and that in dwelling so minutely on the smaller facts of her life the author is forced to slur over those contemporary movements which affected it for good and for evil. Corinne is the heroine of his story—Corinne in her childhood, making paper kings and queens, and setting them to act scenes of an improvised tragedy; Corinne in her teens, "writing small comedies after the manner of M. St. Marck;" Corinne in the sensitive age of maidenhood, when "the presence of celebrated persons would make her heart palpitate" and she fed her sensibility on "Clarissa Harlowe;" Corinne at twenty, marrying that accomplished Swedish nobleman, Eric Magnus, Baron de Staël Holstein, aged thirty-seven; Corinne, the ambassadress, shining at the court of Versailles; Corinne, the authoress, publishing her first work, the "Letters on Rousseau;"

* Madame de Staël. A Story of Her Life and Times. By Abel Stevens, LL.D. In two volumes. New York: Harper & Brothers.

Corinne passing under an arch of revolutionary pikes and standing before Robespierre in the Hôtel de Ville; Corinne as the centre of the Mickleham colony in England, flattered by Talleyrand and scorned by Frances Burney; Corinne as the mistress of a salon in Paris, where the remnants of the old nobility mingled freely with the leading spirits of the Revolution, and Duke Adrien de Laval exchanged sentiments with Ducis, and Count Louis de Narbonne with André Chenier; Corinne visited by Fouché, minister of police, and quietly withdrawing from the capital; Corinne at Weimar in the society of Goethe and Schiller; Corinne in Count Orloff's palace on the Neva; Corinne in London, at Holland House and at Rogers's literary dinners; Corinne returning to France after Waterloo; and, finally, Corinne dying peacefully in Paris, conversing almost to the last with those leaders of thought whose names have shed their lustre upon hers. Through all these vicissitudes Dr. Stevens follows her with an enthusiasm that nothing can abate. If she enters into questionable relations with Constant, he finds a ready excuse in her temperament. If she is seen too much in the company of Rocca, he hastens to produce their marriage certificate. If she asks Fichte to explain in five minutes a system to which he had devoted his life, and then proposes to illustrate his exposition with a story from Baron Munchausen, he applauds her wit. If Goethe's mother frowns on her or Madame D'Arblay snubs her, he denounces their stupidity. Madame de Staël's capacity for compliments was inordinate, but the flattery of her contemporaries was weak beside that of Dr. Stevens. He will doubtless do much to revive her waning reputation, for nobody can afford to leave his attractive volumes unread who would study the inner literary life of the French Revolution and the First Empire.

Colonel Forney's Novel.*

WITHIN the space of one short week Colonel John W. Forney has published a volume of recollections and a novel. The former was reviewed in the last number of the CRITIC, the latter comes up for notice to-day. From the rumors afloat in advance of publication we were led to believe that Colonel Forney was following in the footsteps of Lord Beaconsfield and would give us in "The New Nobility" a novel after the manner of "Endymion." There are certain points of similarity between the two books. Colonel Forney introduces some well-known persons under fictitious names and the heroes of the story acknowledge that they "owe most of their success to women." "Endymion" has no stronger claim to the name of novel than has "The New Nobility." There is little plot in either, but of the two we think that Colonel Forney's book has the more, as it has two heroes and three heroines and a proportionate amount of love interest.

Notwithstanding his diplomatic experience Colonel Forney is the soul of candor. In a note that prefaces his story he tells us: "The whole idea and scope of this volume are my own—and some of its early chapters; but the body of the book, especially the middle and last passages, is the work of my gifted personal friend, Rev. William M. Baker, of Boston, Massachusetts, who kindly responded to my invitation to edit and finish the 'New Nobility.' This gifted 'personal friend' is the author of the 'No Name' novel, 'His Majesty Myself.' Certain other chapters in the book are said to have been written by Charles Reade, others again by Mrs. Forney, but the editing and the greater part of the writing was done by Mr. Baker, therefore it is hard to know just where Forney ends and Baker begins. The last half of

the book is a little more compact than the first half. There is more story and less description as we near the end. Colonel Forney calls the book a "Story of Europe and America." "A Story of Americans in Europe," would describe it better. The scene is laid entirely on the other side of the water. The American hero is Henry Harris, whose father is described as a Pennsylvanian who began life as a blacksmith's apprentice and ended it as a millionaire. The elder Harris seems to be a great favorite with the author. He is evidently drawn from life and is a combination of Joseph Harrison and M. W. Baldwin of Philadelphia. The character of old Gray is Walt Whitman beyond a doubt, though he is introduced in a Paris drinking house. The description is unmistakable:

A man of slow movement, six feet tall, stoutly built, with blue eyes, red and tanned complexion, white or almost white beard, mustache, and hair very profuse, quite untrimmed, and the latter falling over an enormous shirt-collar, snowy clean, flaring wide open at the throat, free of necktie, and with proportionately vast cuffs, turned over at the wrists. The shirt-collar and wristbands with their unusual blanch of copiousness, having first been observed, you saw that the name by which his friend announced him was fully warranted. He was dressed in an entire suit of light English gray, loose sack-coat, trousers, vest, with overgaiters on his ankles, all of the same material. Nor must the hat be forgotten, a soft nutria, mole-colored, broad-brimmed, and of specially generous crown—a characteristic hat, the kind which travellers will remember seeing in New York and some of the old Southern cities.

That the speech he makes on America is his this passage will prove:

We are a People, averaged, dilated, religious, sane, practical, owning their own homes—fifty millions, as the next census will show—sublime masses, such as the world never saw before. Faults enough there are, and miseries enough, and frauds enough, and the poor and unemployed, no doubt. Yet where else is Man so brought to the front? Where are the ideals of all enthusiasts, and all the past, already so realized?

Certainly Whitman wrote that for his friend Forney. There are expressions in the speech that are not those of Whitman. That virile writer never sprinkled his remarks with such commonplaces as "believe me," and "as I said." The original of the American heroine, Mary Harris, we are at a loss to discover. We can think of no young lady possessing the "startling beauty that comes with golden hair," nor do we know (or want to know) one who, when a young lordling made a conventional remark about the Paris Exposition, replied, "I always take refuge in gratitude to God that all these wonderful things were made by his creatures, and so are a kind of worship of him." "I never heard such a view of the Exposition," replied his lordship, and it is quite likely he never had. The English heroine, Lady Blanche Conyngham, was "the only daughter of a peer of the realm, and sister to the heir of a large estate." Her character is not ill drawn. She was consistent to the end. Both of these heroines were anxious that the young men should do something in the world, so, being good natured and accommodating, they consented. There was not much of a career open for them in Paris, but fired by the words of their respective sweethearts they could not remain idle. The American was the leading spirit. He proposed that they should dress in blouses and caps and mingle with the working classes. This they did. They mingled in Paris, in London and in St. Petersburg, and in the latter city were arrested as Nihilists. It was found that they were not Nihilists, but it was not proved just what they were up to, and the reader is left quite as much in the dark as to their intentions as was the emperor of Russia.

Colonel Forney has written his story with a purpose, which is to show that

* The New Nobility. A Story of Europe and America. By John W. Forney. New York: D. Appleton & Co.

"The rank is but the guinea stamp,
The man's the gowd for a' that."

"The Vision of Nimrod."*

It is difficult to criticise the "Vision of Nimrod" without apparently indulging in hyperbole, or at the very least in superlatives. It is designed on a colossal scale, and the execution is in the main fully equal to the conception.

Although the plot of this romance is extremely simple, the incidents and personages few in number, and the dramatic action measured and dignified rather than passionate, yet the interest of the reader is unflaggingly sustained by the splendor of description, the vigorous originality of thought and imagery, and the powerful realism with which the half-mythical figures are outlined in huge relief against the barbaric magnificence of the background. Mr. de Kay has nothing in common with the delicate miniature painting of the modern school, the extreme development of the exquisite style that originated with Keats. At his best he has a Biblical grandeur and directness; at his worst he is uncouth, extravagant, or repellently realistic. But of the ordinary faults of contemporary versifiers—imitativeness, effeminate daintiness of touch, lack of imagination and passion, and corresponding excess of fancy and sentiment—we find no trace in his pages. The form in which he has cast his poem is an evidence of his fine artistic sense. We do not remember to have met before with the melodious stanza which he has selected, or possibly invented, and which by its dexterous intermingling of masculine and feminine rhymes, and the variety of cadence imparted by its concluding short couplet, gives us a measure that is sweet without being cloying, and musical without monotony:

"A silence fell. Viewed from that giddy height
The town embowered in trees, the country gleaming
With silvery criss-cross of canals, the light
From myriad dwellings, and the sky-shine dreaming
On the broad river—all was visionary,
Sublime, unreal—a checker-board methought,
And I the giant who from cloudlands airy,
Conning the little squares, most lightly ought
With outstretched hand to gain
The mimic plain."

Not the least remarkable feature of the poem is its reproduction of the oriental spirit and manner. Mr. de Kay has the true oriental felicity in combining words and coining epithets, and he has so thoroughly imbued himself with the Eastern thought that Asiatic modes of expression appear to arise as naturally to his mind and fall as easily from his pen as though they were his birthright. Thus he makes Gourred implore her lover to confide his grief to her:

"Speak; let your words, fruitful as citron flowers,
Bloom from strong soil about my listening ear;
Speak; let your wisdom like the autumnal showers
Rain on the desert of your silence drear.
Better may two sustain
Pleasure and pain."

And in a still loftier vein of genuine Oriental philosophy he places these words in the mouth of his Reformer:

"But my great mission shall not be in vain.
We're God's own; he is ours; from him we borrow
This wondrous robe of fleshly joy and pain
And lay it back within the chest to-morrow."

Nor is the lighter Epicurean note of Eastern song beyond the compass of the American poet's voice:

"The star
I worship best is that which wanes and waxes
Reflected in the wine from yonder jar.
The round heaven of my soul
Is you, O bowl!"

Mr. de Kay has even had the courage to adopt a singular Oriental custom at the risk of appearing eccentric and egoistic to most Western readers; we refer to the introduction in the epilogue of the author's name, without which no Persian poem was formerly considered complete, and which, we believe, served as the stamp of copyright. It would be easy to multiply separate verses and passages that give a powerful impression of Mr. de Kay's audacious genius; it can only irritate and surprise the admirers of his work that he should so often recklessly expose it to the ridicule or censure of acute critics who happen to read it without sympathy. We demand two things of a poet: first, that by

his emotional or intellectual spirit he shall kindle in our hearts an ardent responsive glow; and, secondly, that by the perfect command of his art, he shall afford us an opportunity to analyze and admire coolly and dispassionately the structure of his verse. Mr. de Kay, by the breadth and loftiness of his design, and the extraordinary vigor of his imagination, boldly challenges comparison with the highest poets. We cannot help thinking that (perhaps unconsciously) he had the image of Dante before him when he wrote the vividly realistic and grandiose vision of the Tarn of Kaf, wherein the expression

"What found itself within those arms involved
Left hope behind,"

which, in a lesser poet, would seem like an impertinence, appears perfectly legitimate and in harmony with its surroundings. And again in the cantos descriptive of the Fanes of the Temple, we should have to go back to Spenser for a parallel to their brilliancy of word-painting, and their wealth of imaginative symbolism. But a kinship, however remote, with such masters as these, cannot be claimed with impunity; it imposes an arduous responsibility, and after the American poet has recalled them to our memory, we are all the more disturbed by the not infrequent negligence with which his work is defaced. Is it carelessness, haste, or indifference which permits him to publish lines that will not scan, lines not of one or two, but of three or four redundant syllables, false and impossible rhymes, and in one instance a verse shorn of its due proportions and lacking a line? A far graver fault is his occasional lapse from the beautiful to the grotesque or the coarse; his imagination is not always, as it should be, under the guidance of a sure taste. Here, for instance, is a verse begun in his strongest and richest vein, and degraded at its close by a far-fetched metaphor devoid of grace, dignity and truth.

"Know you how spring ascends the mountain valleys
In fragrant dances on the line of snows,
Enrobed in wind half cool, half warm, that dallies
With vineyards, now and now by snow peak blows?
When vernal hills are green with dainty guesses,
With hope, with promise of delicious pain,
And sun from udders of the glacier presses
The foamy milk, life to the thirsty plain—
Know you the zest that fills
Spring in the hills?"

These purely superficial blemishes do not in the least detract from the real greatness of the poem, which consists in such force and scope of thought, imagination, and passion as to overpower all petty faults of mere technical detail. Mr. de Kay's mastery of the difficult verse which he has chosen proves that it rests but with himself to withhold in future even this scanty bit of ground which the critics of the microscopic school can now stand upon.

An unworthy verse grates with double harshness upon our ear from a poet capable of imparting to his song, with a few simple monosyllables, the very accent of the antique, as in his description of Saturn, which is not so much word-painting as word-sculpture. Taking the poem as a whole, perhaps some readers will object to an excessive tendency to description, almost the only fault which Mr. de Kay shares with his contemporaries. For our part, his wealth of illustration and the powerful originality with which he uses words give to his descriptions so singular a charm that we would not willingly dispense with any one. While it may be true that the human interest is often made subordinate to what some may consider mere picturesqueness, yet the dramatic personages, as far as they go, are no stock poetical figures, but made of real flesh and blood.

THEODORE THOMAS'S appearance as a writer will no doubt be a surprise to those who imagine that the baton and the bow are the only instruments familiar to his hands. His article on "Musical Possibilities in America" in *Scribner's Magazine* will be read because his name is attached to it, and remembered for its good sense and practical value. What he says about American voices is perfectly true. He is not so German in his views that he does not see that the Italian method of using the voice is the proper one. "We need some provision for the talent which is developing every day," he exclaims: "we need institutions, well endowed, which will not be obliged to adopt a mere commercial standard for want of the means of support." We would have had such an institution four years ago if the will of the late Samuel Wood had been executed as he intended it to be. America is deprived of a musical college that would do her the greatest honor by a suit which has occupied the attention of the surrogate for the past three years and is still unsettled.

* The Vision of Nimrod. By Charles de Kay. New York: D. Appleton & Co.

The Critic

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We find, just before going to press, that the fable, "How Mr. Fox Failed to Get his Grapes," was, through a misunderstanding, published in Mr. Harris's own paper, The Atlanta Constitution, on the day after the appearance of the last number of THE CRITIC, for which it was originally intended.

MR. HOWELLS leaves the editorial chair of the *Atlantic* accompanied by the regrets of a large part of the American literary world. Doubtless he may have made enemies in his difficult position, but not many certainly, and not very bitter ones. If there ever was in the editorial chair of a leading magazine an editor who exercised a more unfailing courtesy than he toward an army of contributors and correspondents, his name is not known to fame.

It is to be hoped that Mr. Howells will devote himself more seriously than heretofore to writing for the stage. True "that way madness lies," but Mr. Howells has passed the period of madness. He has had a useful experience, and probably knows enough not to expect too much; and success in this field, when it does arrive, makes up for many disappointments. It is time that Mr. James, also, tried his hand at the stage. It is hard for an outsider to be convinced that men as quick-witted as the writers we have named—and others of our authors whose names will occur to the reader—could not succeed in a line which requires, no doubt, assiduous attention to details—in other words, "familiarity with the stage," but in which also a good supply of brains ought not to be superfluous baggage. There are successful men in all the professions who are capable of giving the look "from above downward;" but the self-complacency of a judge of the Supreme Court is an insignificant attribute compared with that of a maker of plays that are actually played. It must be confessed that the frequent failures of amateur dramatists give sufficient occasion for the conceit of the successful playwright; but when one contemplates the sort of thing that has been produced, as a rule with honorable exceptions, by the successful American playwright for a generation past, one cannot but desire that a few more "amateurs" may rush in where angels fear to tread, to the end that something may be done—even if by accident only—to make theatre-going a rational enjoyment. If Mr. Howells, Mr. James, Mr. Aldrich, Mr. Cable, Mr. Boyesen, Mr. Harte, or Mrs. Burnett (who, 'tis said, has been working lately on a play)—if all or any of them would devote themselves to the writing of plays for a reasonable length of time, it is safe to say that something would come of it. If they had been French instead of American authors, they would each have been in the way of writing a dozen or more plays by this time. At any rate, Mr. James would have done so, with his unusual interest in the stage and marked ability as a dramatic critic.

It is a little singular that there should be so much uncertainty as to the power of literary reviewers and art critics to make or mar the immediate financial fortune of a book or picture. We have heard our elders talk of the days when a single long and favorable review would "sell an edition" of a book. If there ever was such a time, it has long gone by. We have seen in our day excellent books of poetry

profusely praised in the most reputable periodicals, while the first and only edition was lying unsold on the counters of the publishers. We have known, on the other hand, books of poetry and of prose of which the same critics generally fought shy meet with prompt financial success. In the case of pictures, it is no unusual thing in New York to see the canvases most persistently praised by nearly all the leading newspapers of the city sold at from one tenth to one half the price of other works, in the same galleries, which have either been slighted or severely attacked. We can, it is true, recall one instance where a single criticism, which covered a picture by a popular artist with ridicule, had a damaging effect, not only upon that work, but upon subsequent works by the same artist. But the same critic might, we fear, have praised a picture till doomsday without any corresponding effect. Still, nearly every author and nearly every artist has reason in his own experience to prize the favorable mention of the press, and we have yet to meet with one who is indifferent to such matters—even aside from the consideration of vanity, and merely from a business point of view. The question arises whether the time will come in America when current criticism will have more specific and tangible results. This question we shall not venture to answer. In Paris we find matters, so far at least as pictures are concerned, a good deal as they are in New York. The pictures most praised by the most eminent critics are often far from being those that are sold first in the galleries, or that bring the highest prices.

AARON BURR'S RECEIPT-BOOK.

THE book-hunters of the city are on the *qui vive* for the flushing of a covey at the auction-rooms of Messrs. Bangs & Co., on Monday next, February 28th. The occasion is the sale of a choice though small collection of bibliographical curiosities of various kinds. Among these one of the most curious is an oblong volume bound in its original leather, which is unique in its interest, being Aaron Burr's receipt-book, dating from 1792 to 1794. The receipts serve to throw most curious side-lights upon the owner's domestic and legal business during these years. Among the signatures of the recipients of Mr. Burr's money are found the names of William Irving, the father of Washington Irving; Frederick De Peyster, the father of the present President of the New York Historical Society; and Daniel and Sidney Phœnix, the ancestors of well-known residents of the city bearing the same family name. The relic contains also the receipt for the expenses of the funeral of the first Mrs. Burr; and evidences of other payments by the original owner of the volume to other ladies, some of whom sign their names with a +. The receipts are made out in the terms of the English currency, which then prevailed in this city, and the pounds, shillings, and sixpences recorded read oddly enough to American ears in these days of greenbacks and national bank notes. As the papers and other literary property of Burr passed at his death into the possession of Mathew L. Davis, his literary executor and biographer, and were sold by him to a paper mill, it is very seldom that as genuine and authentic a document as this has been preserved. It is a question whether Mr. Parton ever saw it, or even knew it was in existence, when he collected the material for his life of Burr. Should any of Burr's descendants, some of whom live in this city; or the trustees of Princeton College, where Burr's memory is still enshrined; or the representatives of some of our historical societies; or three or four book-hunters, who have a passion for rarities of this kind—chance to be present when the covey is flushed, rare sport may be expected.

THE new edition of Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, announced by Messrs. G. & C. Merriam, contains over 118,000 words, including 4600 new words and meanings. There are nearly two thousand pages, illustrated with 3000 engravings and four colored plates, and in the biographical dictionary are enrolled nearly ten thousand names. It would seem that these improvements could not fail to increase the popularity of the work.

THE THRESHERS.

THIS is the wheat,—
 The wheat well-grown, man's lawful spoil,
 The new-plucked fruit of patient toil ;
 Pledge me the farmer's sinewy hand,—
 His goodly acres waiting stand ;
 Pledge me the hands his force can wield
 To plow, to sow, to reap the field !
 Bruise the bright heads, and break them sore,
 Scatter the chaff from door to door,
 Show me the kernel sound and sweet,—
 The nation's bread, the winnowed wheat !

This is the flail,—
 The noisy flail, whose loud uproar
 Wears on the oaken threshing-floor ;
 A measured beat, a ringing round,
 A hardened resonance of sound !
 The long, low scaffolds wax and wane,
 Down drop the sheaves of garnered grain,
 And empty, careless, laughter-wild,
 The yellow straw is loosely piled.
 Those level crashings tell the tale,—
 Swing round the flail, the mighty flail !

These are the men,—
 The men who cleave, with sturdy stroke,
 A fallen giant's heart of oak,
 Now build for life, and life's demands,
 And fill with bread the waiting lands.
 Clash rhyme with rhyme, the threshers' song,—
 Deal blows on blows, strike loud and long ;
 The wrench of hunger drives at length
 The iron of unyielding strength ;
 Wield the bent blade,—again, again,
 And serve the puny race of men !

ELAINE GOODALE.

ALBION W. TOURGEE.

ALBION W. TOURGEE, LL.D., derives the title by which he is generally known from six years' service on the bench of the Superior Court of North Carolina. The striking success of his political novel, "A Fool's Errand," followed in less than a year by a second success only less remarkable, has given him a national reputation as a vigorous writer and a close student of politics and questions of political economy. He is generally supposed to be an older man than he is, or than his picture makes him to appear. Good fortune as a politician seems to have attended him at his birth, for he is an Ohio man, having first seen the light at Williamsfield, Ohio, in May, 1838. His youth, however, was spent in the East, in Western Massachusetts, and his schooling was to have been completed at Rochester University, whither he went in 1858. But, as in the case of many other patriotic young men of that day, his college course was interrupted by the outbreak of the war. In April, 1861, he enlisted in the 27th New York Volunteers, and at the first battle of Bull Run he was wounded. A year of invalidism was spent in study of the law, which secured his admission to the Ohio bar. He re-entered the military service in July, 1862, as captain of a company in the 105th

Ohio Volunteers which he had raised. His service in the field was soon terminated by the fortune of war, which made him a prisoner. He was confined at Atlanta, Salisbury, and in Libby Prison. At the close of the war, a mild climate being essential to the restoration of his broken health, he settled, with his wife and daughter, in Greensboro, N. C., where he began his career as a "carpet-bagger," and where he still resides. The practice of the law was successfully pursued, and in 1867 he was a delegate to the State Constitutional Convention. A year later he became Judge of the Superior Court. During this term of office, which expired in 1874, the Ku-klux Klan was exposed and broken up, largely through his individual efforts. He took the sworn confessions of several hundred members of the order, and the material thus acquired was subsequently utilized in his books. His career of fifteen years in the South as lawyer and judge was marked by professional work of a high order. In 1869 he was one of the commissioners appointed to prepare the Code of North Carolina, and in 1875 he was again a delegate to the State Constitutional Convention. His Alma Mater conferred the degree of A.B. upon him when his class graduated in 1862, and, in 1880, made him a Doctor of Laws.

Among Judge Tourgee's published works are three law-books—a North Carolina "Form Book," published in 1868 ; "The Code, with Notes and Decisions" (1877), and "Digest of Cited Cases" (1879). His first contribution to fiction was made in 1874, when, under the *nom de plume* of Henry Churton, he wrote "Toinette," a tale of the South, a work which attracted much attention from moralists living below Mason and Dixon's line, by the peculiar views expressed in it concerning the social relations of whites and blacks. In September, 1879, the Judge published a second novel, "Figs and Thistles : a Story of the Western Reserve and the Civil War." The embodiment of a portion of General Garfield's career in this story added to its interest, and during the campaign the book was placed upon the list of exceptionally successful works. The publication of "A Fool's Errand," two months after "Figs and Thistles," produced a genuine sensation. The resources of the publishers were taxed to the utmost to supply the demand, which in a year's time had called for nearly 150,000 copies of the book—a sale which is said to be unknown since the publication of "Uncle Tom's Cabin." "Bricks Without Straw" followed, in October, 1880. The circulation of these three works, published within a period of thirteen months, is placed at nearly 225,000 copies. In addition to his literary labors, Judge Tourgee has done effective work as a political speaker. At present he is lecturing on "The Ben Adhemite Era," and dramatizing "A Fool's Errand." An article from his pen in the February number of *The North American Review* ("Aaron's Rod in Politics") unfolds the plan suggested in his political novels for the redemption of the South from the perils of illiteracy by a system of national aid to education. Despite the temptation to devote his time and energies to book-making, Judge Tourgee expects to resume the practice of the law in North Carolina. Mention of some experience of newspaper editing should be made in enumerating the various fields of labor that he has successfully cultivated. The pen-and-ink portrait of Judge Tourgee in this number of THE CRITIC was drawn by Mr. Will H. Low, from a photograph by F. Gutekunst, of Philadelphia.

BJÖRNSTJERNE BJÖRNSSON, the Norwegian poet, has had a most successful tour through the West. Whenever he has touched Norwegian settlements, the peasants have flocked to the railway station to catch a glimpse of him, and, if possible, grasp his hand. Mr. Björnsson will not lecture in New York. He sails for Norway in April.

Ward's "English Poets."*

THE third and fourth volumes of Mr. Ward's collection of "English Poets" maintain the high standard of excellence which the first two established. The third volume, comprising as it does the poetry of the eighteenth century, with which our generation is so absolutely out of tune, is the crucial test of the series, and no greater proof could be desired of the editor's skill and tact than that he has made this volume as interesting to the historical student of English literature as its companions are. The admirable plan of the book is carried out in a thoroughly satisfactory way, both as regards the representative character of the selections and the discrimination and acute critical power evinced in most of the prefatory notices of the various poets. Especially notable is the charming monograph on Gray by Mr. Matthew Arnold, who strikes at the outset the keynote of the poet's sweet but scanty song, and in a few pages, distinguished by exquisite delicacy of style and thought, interprets the rare spirit of Gray's genius. This memoir is the more refreshing, as it follows immediately upon the shrill and vociferous panegyric of Collins by Mr. Swinburne, whose critical essays seem to us always to be pitched in so high a key, and to be defaced by such grotesque exaggerations, that their author overreaches the aim toward which he strains, and arouses a feeling of positive resentment and antagonism against the subject of such bawling vehemence of admiration. Hamlet's impatient criticism, "Words, words, words," invariably recurs to us in reading these blustering eulogies, wherein Mr. Swinburne seems more bent upon collecting together sonorous syllables, curious assonances, and unheard-of combinations of epithets, than in conveying any idea or guiding our judgment to any clear perception of the beautiful. Among the less successful sketches we rank also Mr. Symonds's Essay on Lord Byron, which only confirms the impression that the subject has been fairly exhausted by admirers and detractors. This chapter fatally suggests Dr. Johnson's hackneyed sentence, that "what is new is not true in it, and what is true is not new." It is decidedly original on the part of a critic to tell us that "Shelley admired, but never made a friend of Byron," that "Byron's best poetry admits of no selections being made from it," that "he was essentially an occasional poet," that "his work is like the raw material of poetry," and that "his personality inspired no love." The rest of Mr. Symonds's opinions and statements are well worn and familiar to us all. Mr. Frederick Myers, to whom was entrusted the note on Shelley, is earnest, thoughtful, and sympathetic, as he always is, and Mr. Matthew Arnold finds something new and graceful to tell us about Keats. The extracts from the minor poets are made with great taste and judgment, and we question whether the powerful fragments from Chatterton and Crabbe will not revive interest in their too much neglected work.

Two New Cook Books.

THE fact that Marion Harland derives an income of \$2500 a year from her cook-book has doubtless served as the incentive to the writing of many books on the same subject. What could be easier, the housekeeper asks, than to string a few recipes together and write an introduction to them? That the task is not an easy one is proved by the fact that so few of these books are successful. When a writer comes along who can speak with authority, she finds a large audience ready to listen to her and make experiments. Such a one is Miss Parloa, whose "New Cook-Book"† has recently appeared. Miss Parloa is to Boston what Miss Corson is to New York. As Principal of the Cooking-School she writes as an expert and as a Bostonian. New England dishes are especially mentioned, and we are even given a diagram to show "a hind-quarter as it appears in Boston." Another candidate for kitchen favor is Mrs. Helen Campbell,‡ also of a cooking-school. Mrs. Campbell, however, does not confine herself to cooking, but goes into the general subject of the house and its various arrangements. Her recipes are apparently simple, and her book has the recommendation of being short.

* The English Poets. Selections, with Critical Introductions by Various Writers, and a General Introduction by Matthew Arnold. Edited by Thomas Humphry Ward, M.A. Vols. III. and IV. London and New York: Macmillan & Co.

† Miss Parloa's new Cook-Book and Marketing Guide. Boston: Estes & Lauriat.
‡ The Easiest Way in Housekeeping and Cooking. By Helen Campbell. New York: Fords, Howard & Hulbert.

Recent Fiction.

THE author of this sprightly little book* belongs to the class of reformers who would rather write the ballads than make the laws of a nation. By giving, almost without comment, a description of the absurd old system of teaching, he has done more effectual work toward abolishing that system than many more elaborate essayists and thinkers. He reproduces, without exaggeration, the order, which made even the tingle of the master's rod a welcome diversion; the discipline, which decreed that the rising of pupils from their seats should consist of five separate movements, each heralded by a tap of the bell; the marking, by which the best scholar would receive only "fifty" for a recitation, if his chin happened to be held at any but the regulation tip; and the unhappy method known as "grading," by which one boy could keep back a class of thirty, while a child who was an "idiot at numbers" must expect to remain also in the lower classes of everything else. He does justice, however, to one fine element in the old régime, the *esprit du corps*, which was one of its marked features. The children were not only afraid to be tardy, they hated to be tardy; they not only knew they would be punished as for a crime if unnecessarily absent, but they felt that it would be a crime; and reformers have had to contend less against the long-sufferance of parents, the conservatism of committees, the prejudices of masters, and the indifference of the public, than against the entire satisfaction of the children themselves with the existing state of things. It would be gratifying to know if the author is also a good prophet. One thing is certain: in the school of the future the teacher, instead of trying to find out what the pupils know, will be obliged to show what he himself knows; in other words, instead of hearing recitations, he will be expected to teach; but whether all the Utopian expectations of this author will be realized, only time can prove. The slight love-story adds little of value to the book. Theo's ideas of justice do not commend themselves to us, nor do we find her interesting.

THE reader to whom "Asphodel"† brings a first experience of its author will feel a slight surprise. Miss Braddon has a reputation for sensationalism which scarcely prepares one for the bits of quiet, descriptive brightness that are perhaps the principal feature of her new story. The book is not exactly profitable reading; but it is not uninteresting, and not harmful, all the sensation being condensed into one or two events. Miss Braddon shares the usual inability of novelists to create both a hero and a heroine in the same story. In "Asphodel" they are singularly ill-matched, and sympathy with the young girl's purity and nobility is largely cut off by the difficulty of the reader in imagining that such a young man could in any way have tested her nobleness. There is much quiet humor in the book.

THE SUCCESS OF DR. HOLLAND'S BOOKS.

A LITTLE more than twenty years ago a gentleman of forty, or thereabouts, presented himself to Mr. Charles Scribner, then doing business in Grand Street, with a letter of introduction from the late George Ripley. This gentleman is now known as the editor of *Scribner's Monthly*, Dr. J. G. Holland, and his errand was the procuring of the publication of "The Titcomb Letters." The book had been published by single letters in the *Springfield Republican*, and the author asked the privilege of reading two or three of the letters to Mr. Scribner then and there. Mr. Scribner turned the key of the door in his little private room, and bade the author deliver. At the end of the third letter the publisher said, "That is enough; I will take the book." The author replied that he was very glad, as Phillips, Sampson & Co. and John P. Jewett & Co., of Boston, had both declined it, and Derby & Jackson had turned him away that very morning without looking at it. This little book, as may be remembered, was a great and immediate success, and proved to be the leader in a line of fifteen books that were produced and published during the following fifteen years. A recent posting of books reveals the fact that of these volumes there have been sold since the "Titcomb Letters" saw the light, in round numbers, five hundred thousand. The poem, "Kathrina," leads the list with over 90,000 copies, and is followed

* The Schoolmaster's Trial; or, Old School and New. By A. Perry. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

† Asphodel. By Miss M. E. Braddon. New York: Franklin Square Library, Harper & Brothers.

by "Bitter-Sweet" with 74,684 copies. The "Letters," which initiated the series, comes next in popularity with 61,182 copies, and the remaining number is divided among the other books in varying amounts, though there is not one of the volumes that was not a publisher's success. If any other native poem has ever sold as largely in America as "Kathrina," the writer is not aware of it; and although "Bitter-Sweet" has often been declared to be its superior in all the characteristics of a popular poem, "Kathrina" has led it from its first year by nearly 20,000 copies. The time has now come, in the opinion of the publishers, Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons, for new and revised editions. The plates of several of these books are actually worn out, and since they began to be issued twenty millions of people have been added to our population, while an entire new generation of readers has come upon the stage. The plan, as we understand it, is to issue the books one after another in groups. The first group will be the didactic, beginning with the "Letters," which will be followed by "Gold Foil," "Lessons in Life," "Plain Talks," etc. The next group will consist of the verse, in four neat volumes, and the third group will consist of novels. Dr. Holland has for some time been engaged upon the work of revision, which will cover some important changes. "Letters to the Joneses" has been entirely rewritten, so as to make it a series of sketches of personal types, rather than letters addressed to them. "Plain Talks" will be changed by the omission of several lectures, and the substitution of those more lately written, and, in the judgment of the author, better. It is proposed, we understand, to illustrate "The Bay Path" and "Miss Gilbert's Career." The first of these novels never had a fair chance, though, in the hands of the Scribner house, it has sold up to eight or ten thousand copies. It was published by Putnam at a very bad time—just on the retiring wave of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," "The Lamp-Lighter," and other novels, and fell dead, only to be revived by the sale of the author's later books. The novel is the result of a special study of colonial history, and is believed to have life enough in it to engage in an entirely fresh career. We believe it is not yet determined whether these groups of books shall be uniform in size and binding, so as to make complete sets from the three, or whether each shall have its own distinctive character, suggested by the nature of the literary material it is to carry.

LITERARY NOTES.

THE April number of the *North American Review* will contain Mr. Trollope's article on Longfellow.

Mr. Boyesen has had the singular experience of seeing his stories translated into his mother tongue. Three German translations of the "Tales of Two Hemispheres" have been made for as many publishers, and from the German they have been put into Danish, the literary language of Norway.

Carlyle's autobiographical notes, edited by Mr. Froude, and illustrated with two new portraits, will be published in this country by Charles Scribner's Sons simultaneously with their appearance in England, early in March. The original manuscript is in Carlyle's own hand; the preface has been written by Mr. Froude.

Mr. Sterling's long-talked-of volumes on "Old Drury Lane" are rather disappointing. They are more like Pascoe's "Dramatic List" than the chronicle of a famous theatre.

Roberts Bros. will publish several of Gottfried Keller's stories, including "A Modern Romeo and Juliet."

Three books of more than usual interest will be published by Houghton, Mifflin & Co. to-day. They are Whittier's volume, "The King's Missive and other Poems," containing all that he has written since 1878; the "Longfellow Birthday Book," illustrated with a new portrait of the poet; and "Early Spring in Massachusetts," from the journal of Henry D. Thoreau.

Miss Ella Dietz, who as a poet is no less well known than as an actress, has made a play from Bayard Taylor's translation of "Faust," and is acting the part of *Marguerite* in England.

The "American Actor" series, which Mr. Lawrence Hutton is editing for James R. Osgood & Co., will begin to appear shortly. Mr. Hutton has in hand Mr. Lawrence Barrett's "Forrest," Mrs. Clement's "Cushman," and Mr. Ireland's "Mrs. Duff." Mrs. Asia Booth Clarke's volume on the "Booths" is also complete, though not yet sent in. Miss Kate Field's "Fechter" and Mr. Winter's "Jeffersons" are nearly finished. Probably the "Forrest" will be published first.

A new edition of Michaud's "History of the Crusades," with a preface and supplementary chapter, will be published by A. C. Armstrong & Son early in March.

Washington Irving, on his return to New York from London, is described by Mrs. Oakey as "short, stout, and dressed in a tight suit of black, with a wig; but his beautiful eyes and delightful smile, and his expression of benevolence and sweetness gave a prevailing charm."

Harper & Bros. will publish to-day: "The Past in the Present. What is Civilization?" being ten of the Rhind Lectures on Archaeology, by Arthur Mitchell, M.D., LL.D., F.R.S.E.; and Shakespeare's "All's Well that Ends Well" and "The Taming of the Shrew," edited by W. J. Rolfe.

Mr. T. B. Aldrich will enter upon his duties as editor of the *Atlantic* early in March. The editorial chair is not a new one to him, for he was the editor of *Every Saturday* when that repository of foreign literature became an illustrated journal of original matter.

J. B. Lippincott & Co. will issue early in March a new edition of Worcester's Dictionary, the special features of which will be a supplement containing 12,500 new entries, many of them, it is claimed, being words that are not to be found in other dictionaries, and a Vocabulary of Synonyms of words in general use. The supplement is the result of an immense amount of patient and scholarly research.

The dramatization of "L'Assommoir" has just been published in Paris, so now it is free stealing for anybody. "Woman's Love," which is announced at the Union Square, is an adaptation of M. Albert Delpit's "Fils de Coralie," of which the dramatization is also published, and free to all.

It is always in order to try to find out where a successful playwright got the materials for his play. A number of guesses have been made as to the source of Mr. Gunter's inspiration in writing "Fresh, the American." None of these point to "The Return of the Princess," from which novel he very likely got many suggestions.

The late W. H. Tuthill, whose library of five thousand volumes will be sold by Bangs & Co next week, found time during his busy life to write as well as to collect books. He also published a series of articles in the newspapers under the nom de plume of "Anti-Quary," consisting chiefly of incidents and anecdotes relative to early settlers of Cedar County, Iowa, and frequently contributed to *Harpers' Magazine*.

At the sale of a portion of the library of the late Earl of Clare, recently, the manuscript of Sir Walter Scott's "Guy Mannering," was knocked down for \$1,950. Walpole's own copy of his "Anecdotes of Painting and Engraving," in 5 vols., with ms. additions, fetched \$875.

The Sunday edition of the *Courier des Etats-Unis* is to be doubled in size. On and after to-morrow it will appear as an eight instead of a four page paper. This change is made necessary by the pressure of advertisements which has hitherto curtailed the space available for reading matter on the very day when it should naturally be increased. The announcement will be heard with pleasure by the many readers of this organ of the Franco-American population.

A literary treat is promised in "The Life of George IV., as Prince of Wales, Regent, and King: comprising an account of Men, Manners, and Politics during his Reign, together with his Letters and Opinions." The author is Mr. Percy Fitzgerald who promises some hitherto unpublished letters and extracts from diaries. The publishers of the American edition, Messrs. Chas. Scribner's Sons, also announce "The Life of Raphael," by E. Muntz, and the long-expected Ratazzi Memoirs.

Helen W. Ludlow has written an article on "Indian Education at Hampton and Carlisle," for the April *Harpers'*. In the same magazine Miss Charlotte Adams will describe "Italian Life in New York." Miss Adams wrote an interesting article for the *Herald* some time ago on Slavic Life in New York.

When Professor John Fiske puts on his war paint and brandishes his critical tomahawk, let his enemies beware. The *North American Review*, his chosen battle-field, is the scene this month of the demolition of the Rev. Joseph Cook. Professor Fiske calls his paper "Theological Charlatanism," and he names Mr. Cook at once as a theological charlatan. After overcoming his enemy he executes a war dance over his prostrate form, and then apologizes for his levity by saying: "I have not treated him seriously or with courtesy, because there is nothing in his matter or in his manner that would justify, or even excuse, a serious method of treatment."

The story of Adelina Patti in *St. Nicholas* is a true one. It was written by a lady of mature age, who, as a little girl played with the famous singer, herself then but a child. With all its amusing qualities it is a sad story, for it shows us a child of nine years of age made a woman of the world by force of circumstances. We hardly think the children who read it will envy the little prima donna; for, after all, the bouquets thrown to her across the footlights did not give her half the pleasure she would have found in picking daisies in the fields or hunting violets in the wood.

THE FINE ARTS

The Union League Club House.

ALTHOUGH the Union League Club started into being during the war, it has not lost the impetus it then received by constituting itself the champion of progress. Recently it has encouraged the arts of peace by building a huge house in Fifth Avenue, and employing various noted artists to decorate the rooms. At this date the glass and painting by Mr. Louis C. Tiffany are not sufficiently near completion to be noticed, and the dining-room, by John La Farge, has not received the final touches; but enough has been done to show that something entirely new in the way of decorative treatment of rooms has been attempted. To eyes accustomed to the sobriety of interiors treated on the Eastlake and Morris systems, the dining-room of the Union League seems at first almost excessive in brilliancy. The longer one looks, however, the more one feels a grandeur in the design. The ceiling has something of the effect of well-preserved paintings of early middle-age art, in which the backgrounds are gold. Ranks of decoration partially and variously colored white, red, green, or blue, blend agreeably and in a harmonious confusion with the gold ground. An angel, such as one sees above the chancel of Trinity Church, in Boston, but more sculptural, less flowing, less indecisive and floating, gives a centre and rallying-point to the whole room. It occupies the most important position on one of the largest wall spaces. It is a "Victory" with sword and garland. A striking innovation, and one that might easily, if followed by a weaker artist, have lamentable results, consists in the treatment of this "Victory" as a painted bas-relief within a fictitious frame which is moulded on a semicircular ground of tile-work. The daring Mr. La Farge has shown in this case has been crowned with success. It is a beautiful thing, ably carried out, with nothing mean or contracted about it. But if others are to follow this lead, what monstrosities will ensue! The rose-window of colored glass, on the other hand, is peculiarly subdued in tones, possibly in order that attention should not be diverted too much from the wall decorations, possibly because with certain lights these latter would suffer in color. The large coat-of-arms at the end of the hall and opposite the "Victory," is not equal in happiness to the latter, nor to the window, nor to the ceiling decoration. Half the field shows the coat-of-arms of the United States, the other half that of New York. The idea is not to be found fault with, but the picture-in-relief itself (for it is also treated in clay and painted) does not present any strikingly novel or agreeable arrangement. It is, however, in keeping with the rest. And that suggests the singular power Mr. La Farge displays in treating a great interior so that the decoration forms one magnificent whole. He is our first artist to step from the management of an easel picture to the treatment, on broad principles, of walls and ceilings. He has handled Trinity Church, Boston, and perhaps better, this dining hall, as a composer manages an opera. There are the same few notes that recur, infinitely varied; there are the prelude, the recurrent motif, the climax. One feels that the artist has had the whole thing in his grasp, and though it is possible to carp at this bit and criticise that, the whole is a subject for congratulation, not faint praise.

The Coale Collection of Paintings.

THE exhibition of a notable collection of paintings was begun at the Leavitt Art Galleries on Tuesday. Most of the pictures are the property of Mr. S. A. Coale, Jr., of St. Louis, who, on the eve of his departure for Europe for an indefinite period, concluded to offer his gallery at public sale. Coming from the distant West with little or no heralding, this collection takes one by surprise, not only on account of the distinguished names of the artists whose works are represented, but for the importance of their work. Mr. Coale's taste seems to have run in the direction of the light and airy. The number of nude and half-nude figures is remarkable in so small a collection. Of brilliant, showy pictures, Alvarez, Casanova, Kaemmerer, and Benjamin Constant have a number. There is, however, enough serious work to make the collection interesting to those who do not care for the Spanish-Roman school. From the studio of Alfred Stevens there is a large canvas, "In a Garden," and from that of Diaz a half-clothed female figure and an exquisite landscape, "Fontainebleau." There are two Corots, two Meissoniers, and a Gabriel Max; in short, nearly all the best known of the modern painters are represented, including Mr. W. M. Chase, whose "Venetian Fish Market," if not one of his most attractive, is certainly one of his cleverest paintings.

The Christmas Cards.

THE exhibition of designs for Christmas cards at Moore's gallery, Madison Square, has been a point of attraction during the past week.

The exhibition, it is known, is the result of the offer made by Messrs. L. Prang & Co. of prizes of \$1000, \$600, \$300, and \$200, for the best four original designs for Christmas cards. The success of Messrs. Prang & Co.'s scheme last year encouraged them to repeat their offer. Some two thousand designs were sent in response to the invitation, out of which five hundred were selected as possible winners of the prize. The effect of the last year's prize cards is very noticeable among those of this year, and the imitations (perhaps unconscious) of Miss Emmett and Miss Morse, are amusing. Out of the entire lot the committee of award, Messrs. La Farge, Coleman, and Tiffany, will probably settle upon twenty for serious consideration. Conventional designs predominate, but there are a number that show decided originality, among them one marked with the "&" character representing three females in green dresses, blowing long trumpets. The figures are excellent, and the border, with its stamped leather effect, highly decorative.

Art Notes.

Miss Sarah Rachel Hartley, sister of Mr. J. S. Hartley, has written a little book on "Modelling in Clay," which Duncan & Hall, of Philadelphia, will publish.

A volume of *L'Art* is really its own premium, but its publishers continue to offer extra inducements to subscribers. With the volumes of 1879 and 1880 beautiful etchings after Makart and Fortuny were given, and for 1881 Mr. Bouton announces an etching by E. Champollion, after a painting by A. Casanova, entitled "Un Coin dans le Jardin."

The paintings belonging to the estate of the late Sanford R. Gifford, some two hundred in number, will be sold by Thomas E. Kirby & Co. at Chickering Hall, on the evenings of April 11th and 12th. An exhibition of the pictures will be held at the Kirby gallery, 845 Broadway, a week before the sale.

The current number of the *Art Interchange* publishes a portrait of Thomas W. Hovenden, with an excellent reproduction of one of his pictures and a biographical sketch of the artist.

THE DRAMA

"THE Upper Crust," produced at Wallack's on Wednesday, is in many respects an excellent piece of bakery, and yet it resembles almost any other comedy by Mr. H. J. Byron as closely as one loaf resembles another. It deals with the adventures of a *Mr. Doublechick*, who is suddenly enriched by the invention of a patent soap, and who immediately aspires to a place among the British aristocracy. He is a deplorably vulgar person, and the very low estimate that he sets on the morals of the British aristocracy seems to be entirely justified by the facts. For there is one *Lord Hesketh*, a most improper nobleman of the bluest blood, who has not only abandoned his infant son, but has also lent an accommodating ear to the social and financial overtures of *Mr. Doublechick*. Moreover there is a certain *Sir Robert Boobleton*, a young baronet of sporting proclivities, who is not unwilling to sell his name, his youth, and his sporting proclivities to the highest bidder in the matrimonial market. Now is *Doublechick's* fortune made. He will get into society, and his daughter will marry a baronet. Unfortunately there is a troublesome young architect, one *Wrentmore*, who loves and is loved by *Miss Doublechick* and who puts the worthy soap-boiler to so much annoyance that something very terrible must have happened if *Wrentmore* had not been recognized by another young lady as *Lord Hesketh's* infant son, and *Mr. Doublechick* had not been consoled by the reflection that if he had lost a baronet, he had gained a peer. It needs no great acumen to see the fault of this play. *Doublechick* is a schemer. He does nothing to win sympathy, and the laughter he provokes is rarely with him. It belongs by his vulgarity alone to the family of *Perkins Middlewick*. He has none of the devotion, none of the tenderness, none of the good-heartedness which make the butlerman of "Our Boys" one of the most admirable figures of modern English comedy. Perhaps Mr. Byron will never sound that emotional note again. He can move the machinery of mirth more easily than that of tears.

Mr. Elton plays the part that was originally written for Mr. J. L. Toole. He pays it with a quietude and reserve quite unusual in a low comedian. He is too young an actor to have fallen into the mannerisms which mar Mr. Toole's method, and he brings so much conscientiousness to the study of each new character that he never wears his audience with those iterations of voice and gesture which are the bane of his class. The piece, indeed, is very well done, as nothing that Mr. Wallack presents can fail to be. But, after all, whatever praise or blame belongs to work of this sort must necessarily be given to the playwright. Mr. Byron's comedies run of their own motion. So trim is the dialogue, so well fitted to the stage are the characters,

that the slightest possible action suffices to keep the whole thing going. At the same time "The Upper Crust," like its predecessors from the same hand, cannot but set one wondering in what phase of sublunary existence Mr. Byron can imagine his personages to exist. Sips there sherry in a London club, saunters there on the sweet shady side of Pall Mall, such a nobleman as Lord Hesketh, ready to sell himself to an abominable vulgarian like *Doublechick*? Sits there on a coach-box at Hyde Park corner, wagers there at Goodwood on the crimson-and-black, such an ill-educated dunce as *Sir Robert Boobleton*? Doubtless there are men in Burke's sacred list who are as selfish and as stupid as any the world contains; but they at least maintain some outward show of decency, and if they hector and swagger, and intrigue at home, they are careful that their names shall be ostentatiously put forward as contributors to the *Fortnightly Review*, or as favoring Boer independence, or as heading the division in support of an Irish Land Bill. That is just where Mr. Byron, with all his wit, his stage-knowledge, and his deftness of construction, falls short of the art of T. W. Robertson. And when one thinks of the masters; when one sees Mrs. Candor and Lady Sneerwell transported bodily in their sedans from the pump-room at Bath to the stage of Covent Garden; when one knows the very ale-house where *Tony Lumpkin* sat boozing; when the East Indian nabobs of Foote still play cards of an afternoon in St. James' Square, and *Sir Pertinax MacSycophant* may daily be seen taking snuff in the bow-windows at Boodles', it is hard to repress a hope that the present age of Byronic jokes and puns may speedily pass, and that the reign of nature may be restored to the boards.

"Pinafore" is eclipsed. *Lugete Veneres Cupidinesque*. Mourn for it, *Hebes* and sweet little *Buttercups*. "Billee Taylor" has been produced at the Standard Theatre; *Sir Mincing Lane* has donned the cocked hat of *Sir Joseph Porter*; *Dick Deadeye* has walked the plank, and *Ben Barnacle* leads the press-gang in his stead. The authors of the new comic opera are not altogether novices in their trade. Mr. H. P. Stephens, the librettist, conducts a society paper; Mr. Edward Solomon, the composer, conducts a band. Mr. Stephens is a man of war. He acts as a special correspondent, writes flaring despatches from the battle field, and negotiates duels between Mr. Lawson and Mr. Labouchere. Mr. Solomon, on the other hand, is a man of peace. He writes idyllic ballads for the drawing-room, and breathes out his soul in tender harmonies which young ladies sing at Mrs. Ponsonby Tomkyns's or at Mrs. Cimabue Brown's. The authors, therefore, are very well matched, and the work that they have produced is highly to be commended. Nor is it fair to say that if "Pinafore" had not been written, "Billee Taylor" would never have set off in quest of love and adventure. Both these pieces belong to a class which has for many years enjoyed popularity in England. Nobody who knows the English stage will have forgotten the little Gallery of Illustration, where John Parry and the German Reeds acclimatized the French Vaudeville. Mr. Alfred Cellier could turn round from his conductor's chair at the Standard, and tell the audience between the acts of the humble origins of this now popular genre; he could tell them of delicious trifles by Gilbert, Burnand, and A. Beckett, out of which the comic opera has grown to its present dimensions. The question of originality, or want of originality, is of very slight moment in considering "Billee Taylor." It is enough for the public that it has a chorus of charity girls, a nautical song for the boatswain, a goodly share of sentimental ballads, much color, picturesque costumes, and an excellent actor, Mr. J. H. Ryley, in a part that suits him very well indeed. Mr. Solomon's music is fresh and sparkling and compares very favorably with that which Mr. Braham, the recognized purveyor of street-songs in New York, has composed for the new piece at Harrigan and Hart's. In short, the opera is likely to succeed as well with the audiences who would naturally attend the Standard Theatre as the play of "One Hundred Wives" has succeeded with those who would naturally flock to Booth's.

Mr. Palmer produces "Le Fils de Coralie" at the Union Square on Monday night. M. Albert Delpit, who wrote it, is one of the rising novelists of France. The polish of his style won him the entry of the *Révue des Deux Mondes*; the vigor of his thought suggested to many the idea of dramatizing his work. "Felicia, or Woman's Love," as Mr. Palmer styles the play, belongs to an old and an entirely French school. It paints the tortures of a mother who has a guilty past to conceal, and the devotion of an son whose honor is only dimmed by the shadow of her sin. When he learns the story of her fall, when he knows that he is nameless, he stands for a moment irresolute, then falls at her feet. He remembers all she has done for him, all she has abandoned for his sake. He has no other thought than to take her hand in his, and to vow that he will fight her battle against the world. The scene is very fine. The mother is shown from the first to be the soul of self-abnegation. Rose Eytinge will portray her love and her sorrows, and will very probably add another clearly-limned figure to the gallery of distressful mothers whom she knows so well how to paint. But the whole conception of the play would seem to preclude it from any wide popularity. The morality of the stage is purely convention-

al. The touches of nature which it admits must be very daintily introduced. *Nana* in her glory, *Nana* in her flesh-colored tights or her satin-lined barouche, may be endured, but *Nana* dying of the small-pox—Pah! The audience of the Ambigu may stand it; but they order these matters otherwise at the Union Square. There was a play by Félicien Malleville, "Les Deux Mères." It contained the germs of "Le Fils de Coralie." It was the story of a beautiful Frenchwoman, married to a Russian Boyard, and dependent on the bounty of a Russian prince, who was the father of her daughter. Just as she had concluded an admirable marriage for the daughter, one of her old comrades appeared, and threatened to tell the story of her past life unless the girl's hand were given to an adventurer. Emilie Guyon, then the Rose Eytinge of the Boulevards, now cloistered at the Théâtre Français, played the part with much dignity and sweetness, and the piece had a brilliant career. In English garb it failed disastrously. May its fate contain no omen of evil for "Felicia, or Woman's Love."

Long, long ago, when M. Alexandre Dumas, the younger, went about in the world, and kept his eyes open, he wrote a little article about the people who make a point of attending the first performance of a play. He said that it was more difficult to gather a suitable audience than to write a suitable piece. He was particularly shy of ladies who held some sort of position in society. "They always arrive late," said he; "they care for nothing on the stage but the actresses' dresses; they make as much noise and divert as much attention as possible; they are incapable of following the action; they criticise small points of etiquette; and if they meet the author in their box they simper 'How charming!' just as they would say, 'I hope it will be fine to-morrow.'" It is not likely that many of these ladies ever read this little criticism, but it has served M. Dumas in very good stead now that his new piece "La Princesse de Bagdad" has been hissed at the Théâtre Français. Already the rumor is running round the Boulevards that a cabal of fashionable dames was formed, and that their husbands were prompted to hoot down Mlle. Croizette's tirades and M. Worms's coarse insinuations. The dramatist was found in the green-room after the performance, and he was as prompt as usual with his theories. "What was my fundamental idea?" he demanded. "It was this—that society places all the women who belong to it in a false position—between an imbecile on the one hand and a presumptuous fellow on the other. The imbecile is the husband; the presumptuous fellow aspires to be the lover. In such a situation there is only one chance for the woman, and that chance is her child. That was all I sought to show, and I think I have shown it. Who shall say that the idea is not essentially true and essentially moral?" His interlocutor ventured to hint that it was not the idea which offended, but the language in which it was expressed. "For that matter," said the playwright, "there was only one line in the play that I consented to suppress. That was in the second act. *Nourvady* tells *Lionette* that children are the best tokens of conjugal love. 'Alas!' says *Lionette*, 'the children prove nothing.' 'Surely that was coarse,' remarked the objector. 'Assuredly it was true,' replied Dumas.

In short, the dramatist took his defeat so much to heart that he determined to publish the play. Viewed in the sober light of literature, apart from the seductions of Croizette, apart from the realism of M. Perrin's stage setting, it is certainly a curious production. The lines which the actors inform with meaning are flat enough when you read them. There is a scene in the first act where M. Thiron, as an old buck, explains the genealogy of the *Princess of Bagdad*. Two little bits of dialogue set the audience wild with rapture. They run thus: "When was this?" "In 1853." "You must be old, then?" "I was thirty-nine." "How old are you now?" "Sixty-six." "You carry your years well." "I dye my hair." And again: "In 1853 there lived a king and a queen." "On the throne?" "Yes." "Happy period! Where?" "At Bagdad." "Thanks." This about the king and queen was regarded as a master stroke of wit. Pass to the second act. *Lionette*, still faithful to her husband, calls on the man who has tried to work her ruin. He offers her a million francs in gold, ready to her hand in a casket. "No," she says, "If I loved my husband, I should probably take this gold and save him. It would be one of those numberless basenesses which what they call true love makes us commit. But I love no one and nothing. Fight, kill each other, live or die, I care for neither of you. You have both insulted me, each after your own fashion, and always in the name of love. Ah, if you could but know how I hate and abhor what you call love. To make me believe in love, show me a man who respects the object of his passion. 'Je vous aime: c'est-à-dire, vous êtes belle, et votre chair me tente.'" The husband, with a commissary of police at his back, breaks into the room. Through pique *Lionette* accuses herself of crime. "I swear," she says, "that not only have I given myself to M. *Nourvady* because I love him, but because he is rich and I poor. Having ruined my husband, I sold myself, being unable to endure poverty. The price of my fall is here, a million in gold, coined expressly for me. My husband did well when he yesterday treated me

as a vile woman. I am a vile woman; I boast of it. And if what I say does not convince you, here are the proofs." With which she scatters the gold by handfuls on the floor. And all this is subsequently remedied, her love is reclaimed, her wild passion dies out of her, because at the moment of her elopement with Nourvady, the latter happens to upset her child upon the carpet. Truly, it would be instructive to peep into the household of *Mme. La Princesse de Bagdad* some twelve months after her husband finds her kneeling penitent before the child, *M. Nourvady* having escaped out of the window.

MUSIC

The Philharmonic Society.

For the last concert of the Philharmonic Society Mr. Thomas had arranged a remarkable programme, requiring the services of a strong chorus and a large orchestra, aided by four soloists. The works performed were Bach's cantata, "A Stronghold Sure," rescored by Mr. Thomas, and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

The Bach cantata was the opening number at the last Cincinnati Festival. During the last two centuries the duties of the organists of leading Protestant churches included the composition of cantatas for Sunday services and special festivals. Bach wrote two hundred and ninety-five, making five complete sets of services, but only two hundred and ten are preserved. The cantata at present under consideration is supposed to have been written either for the Reformation Festival, in 1730, or for the two hundredth anniversary of the acceptance of Protestantism by Saxony. It is based upon Luther's hymn, "A Stronghold Sure," the reformer's words forming also the groundwork of the text. For some time it was doubted that Luther wrote the music of this hymn, but it is now established that he did and that it was published under his name in 1537 in a collection of hymns and psalms issued by Hans Preussen. The cantata is divided into the following parts: a fugue for chorus, based on a variation of the chorale; a duet, for soprano and bass; a recitative, an aria, a chorus, a recitative, a duet for alto and tenor, and finally Luther's Hymn, for the chorus alone. The changes made by Mr. Thomas in the orchestral score are fully in keeping with the spirit of the original. The propriety of rescoring the works of Bach and Händel has been the subject of much controversy; but since the defense set forth by Robert Franz in a letter to Dr. Hanslick, of Vienna, it does not now meet with so much opposition as formerly. This opposition must be considered a bit of hypocritical old foggyism; for the croakers are quite ready to sit through a performance of the "Messiah" and other works of Händel which were rescored by Mozart for reasons no other than those given for the changes more recently made in classical works. In the first place, the old composers made mere sketches of their accompaniments, writing, here and there, hints which were sufficient for themselves, but unintelligible to others. Besides this, changes have been made in the composition of the orchestra; for some of the instruments in use in Bach's time are now obsolete. Then, too, the number of vocalists has been greatly increased in modern choruses. Bach was content with twelve voices, whereas Mr. Thomas's chorus numbered four hundred and eighty singers. This increase in the volume of vocal sound demands a proportionate strengthening of the orchestra.

There was a time when the merits of the Ninth Symphony were seriously doubted. It was certainly not appreciated by Beethoven's contemporaries, partly because of the difficulties attending its performance. In those days bands and choruses shrunk from anything which severely taxed their abilities. Spohr, who, in his autobiography, constantly draws comparisons between Beethoven's works and his own, much to the advantage of the latter, has little good to say of this composition. He even speaks of the theme in the last movement as trivial. Now, however, when there have been repeated performances of the Ninth Symphony by orchestras and choruses accustomed to the mechanical difficulties of the modern school of music, the beauties of the work are almost universally acknowledged, and Beethoven is thought to have excelled, in this, his other and more immediately admired compositions.

The interest of the concert centred in the singing of the new chorus. Perhaps Mr. Thomas has never given better evidence of his ability than by the manner in which, within so short a time, he has made this band of singers equal to the task given it on this occasion. In the difficult opening fugue of the cantata, the time was admirable; and, in the concluding number, the unaccompanied chorale, the tone was wonderfully rich and resonant. The Ninth Symphony has been given here, during two seasons, by Dr. Damrosch, and the Philharmonic Society's performance naturally suggested a comparison of the two choral bodies. While Mr. Thomas's untried singers have not as yet the bold attack of Dr. Damrosch's veterans, their phrasing is so clear and they are so much in sympathy with their conductor, that with the aid of the admirable orchestral accompaniment, they gave the most refined interpretation of the Ninth Symphony that has yet been heard

in New York. The soloists of the evening were Miss Hubbell, Miss Winant, Mr. Fritsch, and Mr. Remmert; and it is high praise to say that the difficult quartette in the symphony was not dislocated.

The Songs of Robert Franz.*

WHILE a number of Franz's songs are popular in this country, little is known here of the composer himself. He was born in Halle, on the 28th of June, 1815. His parents knew nothing of music, and, until he was fourteen years of age, discouraged his desire to study it. Then they saw that further opposition would be useless. Dissatisfied with his teacher, Schneider, he soon returned from Dessau to Halle, procured the works of Händel, Bach, and Schubert and studied them zealously. He soon afterward tried his hand at composition, and Schumann was so favorably impressed with his earliest productions that he secured their publication. Franz was at this time devotedly attached to a girl who rejected him, and his first songs are said to be an expression of his disappointment. His works display great depth of feeling, exquisite finish, and skill in counterpoint. He is specially happy in characteristic accompaniments, though some of his happiest effects are produced by giving the melody to the piano and voice simultaneously. Though a disciple of Schubert, he has shown sufficient originality. Some effects he has caught from Schumann, notably the postludium to express the afterthought awakened by the perusal of the poem. It should be noticed also that the words he has chosen for his songs are almost invariably beautiful, and that when he has selected a mediocre poem, his music is also insignificant. The volume before us contains one hundred and seven songs, to most of which are added critical comments from essays by Liszt, Sarau, Ambros, and Schuster. The selection both of music and criticisms is judicious, though it seems strange that Franz's most impetuous and most stirring song, "Er ist gekommen," should have been omitted. Two of the simplest songs in the volume, "Out of my soul's great sadness," and "The Rose complained, with hanging head," are the most beautiful. Indeed, the latter is as exquisite as the odor of a flower. Among the other songs is a charming folkslied, "Dear little maiden mine;" a love song, "Thoughts of Thee;" the dainty melody, "Maiden, with thy mouth all Roses," and "Hark! how the tempest is howling," with its wild accompaniment. It is noticeable that the song, "In May," was also set to music by Schumann, and that there is a strong spiritual affinity between the two compositions. Franz's songs have for us the same quality of meditation and repose that give a charm to Hawthorne's shortest sketches. Like Hawthorne, he seems to have lived in seclusion and to have heard only an echo of the clash and turmoil of the world.

Musical Notes.

MR. RAFAEL JOSEFFY concluded last week his series of three piano recitals, at Steinway Hall, for the benefit of various charitable institutions. The programmes were remarkable for variety, and were interpreted with that finish of execution and fine sentiment for which he is noted. It was a surprise to find a paraphrase of Gilmore's "Columbia" on one of the programmes. Though it was admirably played, the flimsiness of the composition was none the less apparent. Within a few days of the conclusion of Mr. Joseffy's recitals, Mr. Rummel began a series of similar entertainments. The first was on the 17th inst. It will be followed by three more in the afternoons of February 24th, March 5th, and March 10th. Mr. Rummel's first recital was given before a large audience. He played compositions by Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Schumann, Chopin, Floersheim, and Liszt. The Floersheim composition is new. The composer is the musical critic of the *Belletristisches Journal*, and he has already published some piano music that is not unworthy of study. We allude to his "Elevation," played by Mr. Rummel last winter, and his "Poetic Thoughts."

Messrs. Strakosch & Hess bring their English Opera Company to New York next week, and open a short season of opera at the Fifth Avenue Theatre on Monday night in "Mefistofele." Mme. Marie Roze and Mlle. Torriani are the prime donne of the company. The latter will be remembered as having created the rôle of *Aida* in this country.

Mr. John Lavine's sixth annual concert will be given at Steinway Hall on Monday evening next. The soloists who will appear are Miss Louise Reynolds, soprano; Miss Emily Winant, contralto; Mr. Christian Fritsch, tenor, and Mr. Franz Rummel, pianist. The Philharmonic Club will also lend its valuable assistance.

Dr. Damrosch has had a rehearsal of the entire chorus for the May Musical Festival, at which the "Dettingen Te Deum" of Händel and parts of Rubinstein's "Tower of Babel" were sung with considerable precision. Eleven hundred singers were present.

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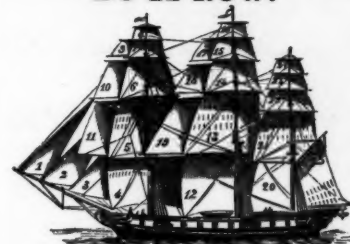
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